Engaging, Impressing and Captivating Language Learners by Interactive Presentations – A Review of Mentimeter

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Title	Mentimeter
Website	https://www.mentimeter.com
Contact Information	hello@mentimeter.com
Type of Product	Interactive presentation platform
Platform	iOS, Android, PC/MAC, and Windows
Hardware Requirements	Smart-device and access to Internet connection
Registration	Required
Price	The Free plan is totally free. The Basic plan costs 9.99 dollar per month, and the Pro plan costs 24.99 dollar per month. The Enterprise version is customed.

Stimulating learners' engagement in a large class is one of the most important issues for language educators (Lamb, 2017). The present review aims to offer a review of Mentimeter for creating interactive presentations in large language classrooms. Driven by the continuous development of mobile technologies, language educators and teachers apply 'Bring Your Own Device' (BYOD) approach in using technology in classes. BYOD allows teachers and students to use their personally owned device and invite them to actively participate in various forms of in-class activities (Stowell, 2015). Mentimeter is an engaging and interactive Learner Response System (LRS). It allows real-time interaction between language educators and learners via mobile devices. At present, Mentimeter has over 200 million users, and 90,000 customers across more than 220 countries and territories (Mentimeter, 2021), and the application of this tool in language education deserves a deep and critical review.

LRS in Language Learning

In traditional language teaching, educators are speakers, and students are listeners. This type of approach implants an inefficient style of one-way communication. 'Show-of-hand' is the most common approach in a large traditional lesson that teachers use to assess students' understanding of knowledge (Cline, 2006). This approach offers opportunities for a small number of active and confident students to participate in class activities, and students tend to follow and imitate each other. The process is relatively slow, which takes considerable time for the teacher to calculate and identify students' responses (Abrahamson, 2006).

LRS predominantly intends to collect learners' responses together with feedback in the digital era. Teachers publish the pre-set questions and students use mobile devices to respond. Existing studies

show that LRS can motivate students to engage in class activities and become increasingly focused (e.g., Simpson & Oliver, 2007). During discussions, students are much more willing to actively participate in discussing their misconceptions and confusions with their educators and peers (Draper & Brown, 2004). LRS can help teachers give formative assessments by providing students with various types of questions in class, together with improved instructions based upon their responses as well (Elliott, 2003). Students become more interactive, and their exam performance would also be accordingly improved (El-Rady, 2006).

Nonetheless, teachers along with students may encounter a number of challenges when using LRS. Allen and Tanner (2005) argue that teachers may experience difficulties in spending time in learning and setting up LRS due to time constraints and work pressure. Pedagogically, integrating current course resources together with curriculum into LRS is not a simple task for teachers (Draper & Brown, 2004). That is, implementing LRS in language education still deserves further attention and practice.

Main features of an LRS – Mentimeter

Mentimeter is a type of LRS which provides engaging and interactive presentations. Teachers can add content slides (e.g., PowerPoint slides) when preparing a dynamic, enjoyable, and multimodal presentation that includes text, images, videos, documents, quotes, numbers, along with any other objects they desire. However, the font, color, style, and layout cannot be customized, which leads it to be considered less user-friendly to PowerPoint by some individuals. Although teachers can upload previously prepared PowerPoint slides to Mentimeter for presentation, the uploaded slides are presented as images rather than their original format, and thus the content cannot be altered. Regarding videos, Mentimeter only allows users to enter YouTube links, so users in a number of regions such as Mainland China cannot use this feature.

Mentimeter enables language teachers to enrich their presentations by adding various types of interactive questions. Popular question types include multiple-choice, word cloud, open-ended questions, scale questions, ranking questions and Q&A board. These questions can flexibly be used to collect quick responses from learners and analyze their understanding of a particular issue. Students can be motivated by varieties of visualizations (e.g., graphs in the multiple-choice question, speech bubbles in the open-ended question.) and generate further interest in learning.

No matter whether being used in warm-up activities, teaching, or reviewing, language educators can always discover a way to make their presentations engaging and inclusive. For instance, a multiple-choice question could be designed for a classroom warm-up when a session aims to introduce Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) in foreign language education. As Figure 1 shows, the multiple-choice question asks students how many MOOCs they have taken before.
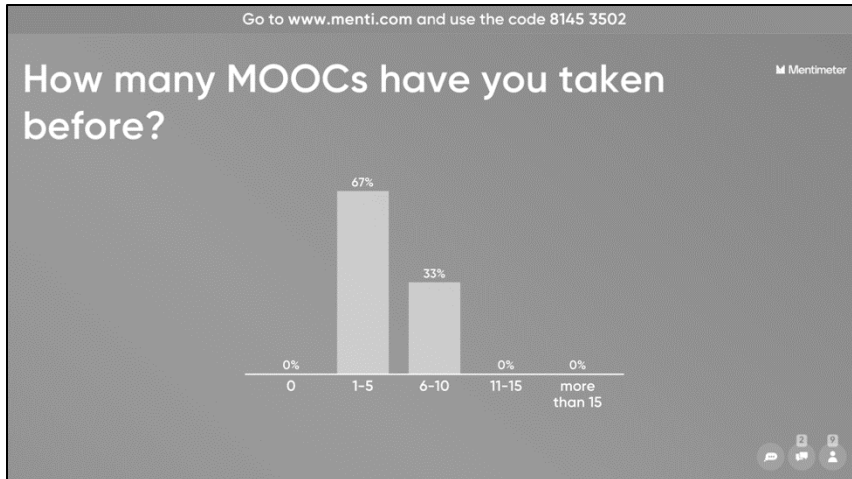
Figure 1. An example of a multiple-choice question for warm-up

Teachers can also design open-ended questions to assist students in familiarizing themselves with the new knowledge when introducing and reviewing as well. As Figure 2 shows, the open-ended question, "What are the differences between MOOCs and online educational videos?" help students "catch the balls" that get dropped.
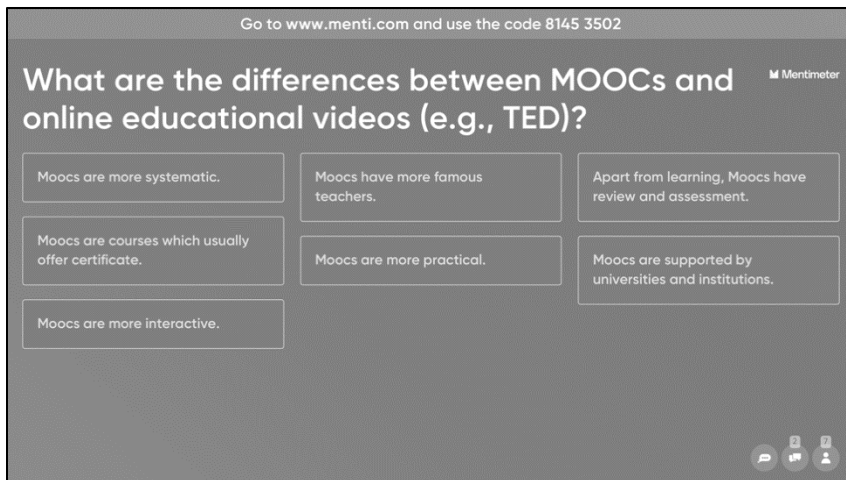

Figure 2. An example of an open-ended question for knowledge retention

Regarding discussion, Mentimeter offers interactive and engaging approaches to stimulate teacher-student and student-student interactions. For example, a word cloud question can promptly collect responses from their students and aid educators in highlighting the most common answers for the audience. As Figure 3 illustrates, teachers set a question, "What are the features of MOOCs?" so as to gather the students' ideas. Apart from that, the ranking question gives educators the power to design interactive polls to encourage class engagement. For instance, students are asked to rank the benefits of MOOCs in language teaching and learning from their own perspectives, as shown in Figure 4. Furthermore, a scale question is an effective way to collect students' voices that promotes class interaction as well. Figure 5 reports students' attitudes toward the usefulness of MOOCs in their language learning.
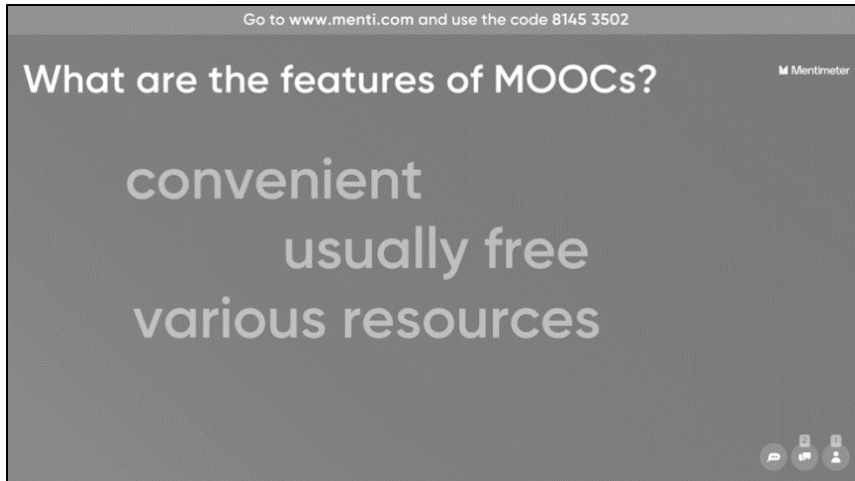
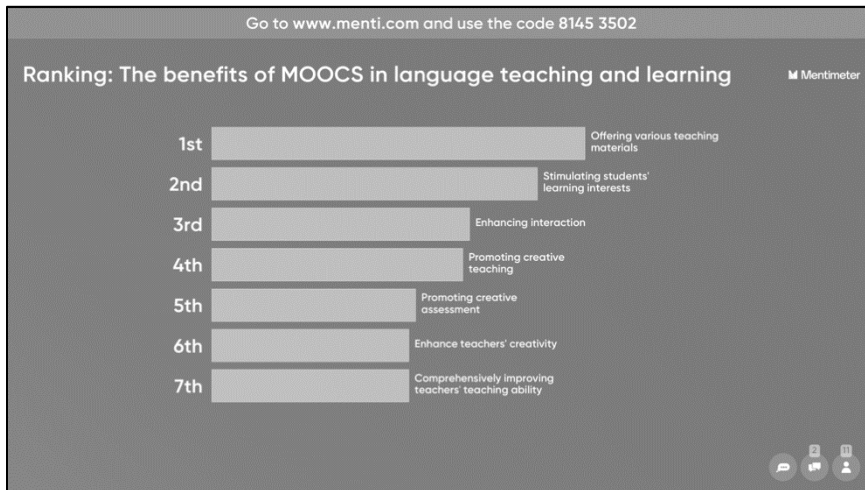**Figure 3.** An example of a word cloud question for discussion

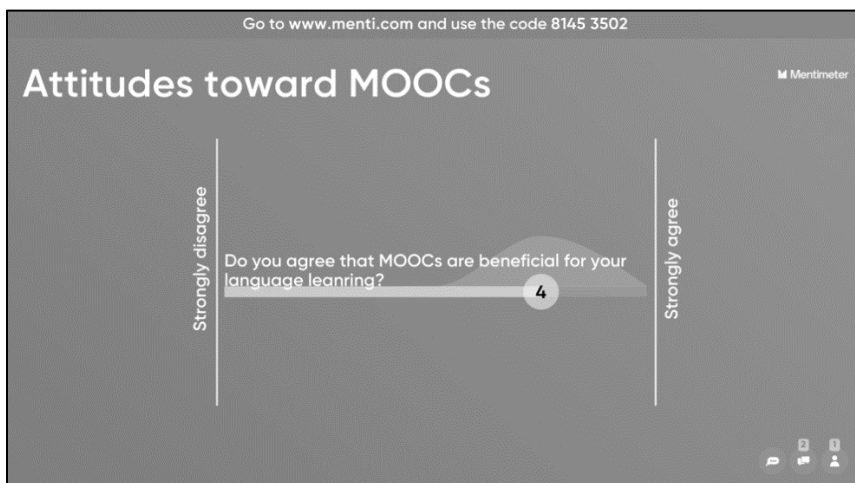**Figure 4.** An example of a ranking question for discussion

Figure 5. An example of a scale question for discussion

Additionally, it is worth mentioning that the Q&A board could be added at the end of the slides, which is a convenient way to collect the learners' feedback, comments, and leftover questions both directly and anonymously (Figure 6). Most importantly, Mentimeter allows the audience to ask questions throughout the presentation as well. "Like", "Question mark", "Thumbs up", and "Thumbs down" options can also be added to each slide for more engaging and interacting opportunities.
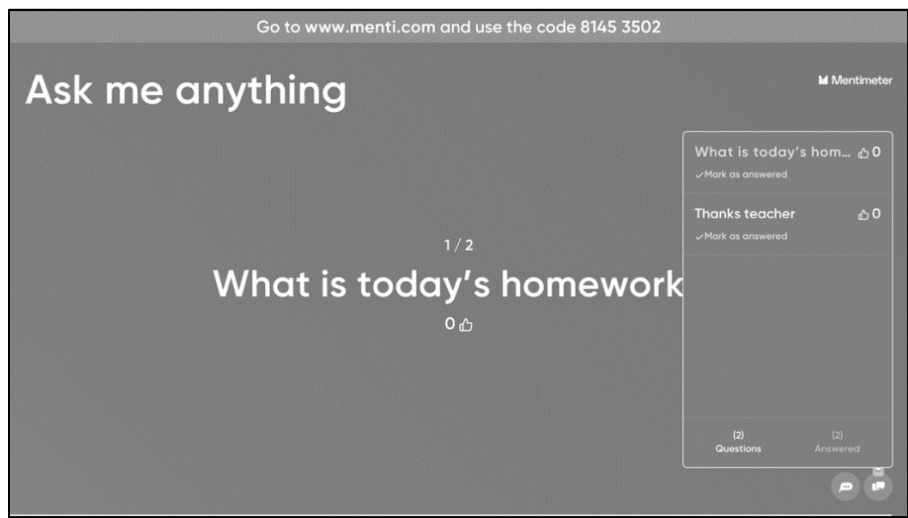

Figure 6. An example of Q&A board at the end of the lesson

Using Mentimeter allows for an easy path forward for teachers to design and host informative quiz competitions to increase the energy within their classrooms. Teachers simply need to enter questions and mark the correct answer. For example, Figure 7 shows a multiple-choice quiz about Bloom's Taxonomy, guiding students to design their MOOC for language teaching. After several questions, the results and the winner will be automatically shown upon the leader board (Figure 8). Apart from designing a unique quiz from scratch, there are assorted quiz templates available on the Mentimeter official website.

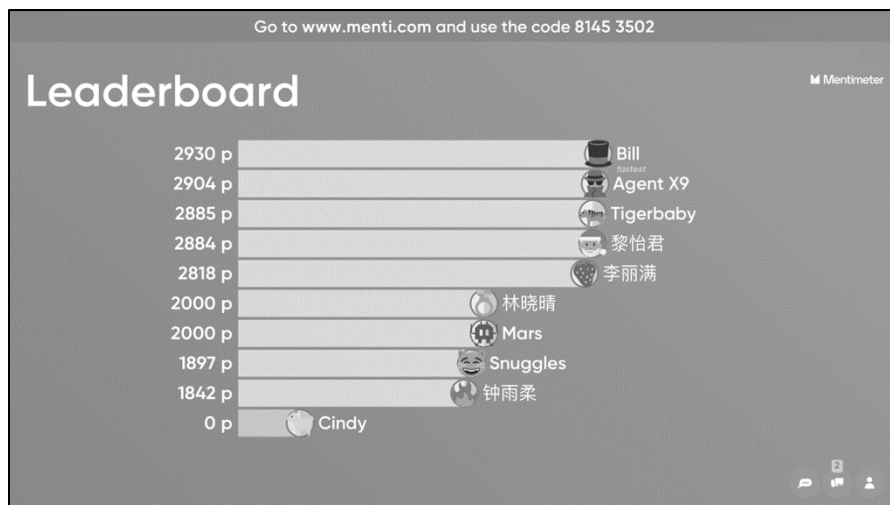**Figure 7.** An example of a multiple-choice quiz

Figure 8. An example of a leader board after a quiz competition

After preparation, educators can invite their learners to connect to the presentation using their smartphones or other available mobile devices. The presentation can be shared by link, invitation number, or QR code. Once the lesson is over, the class data can be shared and exported for further analysis. This data can be compared over time to measure the progress of learners as well.

Thanks to the plugin, teachers are able to bring creativity, interactivity, and ultimately, fun to the traditional PowerPoint presentation. As it has been developed with numerous interactive elements, educators can instantly connect with their learners by bringing their PowerPoint slides to life. The plugin is for Windows PowerPoint 2016, and an Office 365 account is required. In addition, Mentimeter can also be applied in Microsoft Team meetings. Polling, Quizzes, Word Clouds, Q&A, along with other educational applications can be used to engage with the learners accompanied by real-time input straight from the Teams window. Mentimeter can also be integrated into Zoom, which makes meetings increasingly interactive and engaging. Participants are able to vote, ask questions, and contribute to the conversation, and educators can gather honest responses together with valuable insights.

Advantages in using Mentimeter

Mentimeter is an instrument for making fun lectures along with getting students engaged within a dynamic classroom environment. Primarily, Mentimeter provides an opportunity for teachers to create interactive presentations where students ask and vote upon questions and take polls, allowing teachers to engage their audiences in ways that a traditional presentation cannot. In addition, educators can get their students' attention and motivate them so as to involve the students within the presentation itself. Secondly, Mentimeter can be used as a learning and assessment tool, assisting teachers to gain valuable insight into the classroom session and into the language knowledge their students retain by various types of assessments. According to students' responses, particularly their misunderstandings, educators can alter the content of lectures and offer additional support for students before making better-informed decisions. Finally, the flexibility of various questions enables students to answer questions, make real-time comments, and allows for connections between educators and students during a lesson. Answers could be anonymized as well, which could make students feel a higher level of comfort and safety.

Limitations in using Mentimeter

Nevertheless, there are also a number of limitations and possible challenges concerning Mentimeter. The first of which is in terms of designing and editing. Once students have submitted their answers, they cannot retrieve nor edit their responses. This may cause some level of frustration and leave a number of students feeling disappointed. In addition, the customization of the content slides needs improvement, calling for a larger amount of room for the users to change the font and size along with the style of the text, not to mention the layout of the slides themselves. For multimedia input, videos are suggested to be uploaded, rather than only being compatible with YouTube links. Next, from a technological perspective, students can only contribute to Mentimeter if they have a WiFi-connected device. At times the internet connection in numerous regions is relatively slow, especially when loading the mobile Mentimeter App. Teachers may need to consider whether all their students have access to a device that allows them to join in the Mentimeter presentation. This might not be the case in a significant number of classrooms around the world. In contexts with low digital literacy and access to technology, it can be challenging to follow the on-screen instructions so as to submit a response. Finally, the free version of Mentimeter is constricted to two questions and five quiz slides. Users have to purchase the Basic or Pro versions for unlimited questions. In this case, governments and institutions are suggested to give more financial support to purchase Mentimeter paid plans. Teachers may consider also applying traditional presentation tools (e.g., PowerPoint) and other LRS (e.g., Plickers, Kahoot!, Quizlet) to reduce the limitations of Mentimeter. All the relevant stakeholders, including governments, institutions and teachers, are responsible for working together to help students in rural areas enhance their digital literacy.

Concluding remarks

Generally, Mentimeter is a powerful, flexible, and engaging application that offers a solution to improve upon language teaching and learning in a large classroom environment. It enables language educators and learners to share knowledge and give real-time feedback on mobile devices while accompanied by presentations, polls, and quizzes in classes. It is a useful tool to encourage engagement, group participation together with collaboration, and motivates learners to answer questions in an interactive, dynamic, and engaging way. However, there may be a number of barriers in designing the presentation and implementing Mentimeter in today's language classroom. In the future, governments, schools, teachers, and students are advised to cooperate so as to integrate Mentimeter along with other online tools into language education effectively. Further empirical studies are needed to advance the evaluation of the effectiveness of Mentimeter in various language teaching and learning contexts (e.g., formal and informal contexts), regions (e.g., western countries vs. eastern countries and urban areas vs. rural areas) and students (e.g., pupils and university students) to offer additional insights into technology-enhanced language education.

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